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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of :
Denis Ghesquiere :
Application No. 10/667,190 : ON PETITION
Filed: 17 September, 2003 :
Attorney Docket No. 0201-PC :

This is a decision on the petition filed on 13 December, 2004, under 37 CFR 1.137(a)¹ to revive the above-identified application which is first treated as a petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment.

The petition is **dismissed**.

Any request for reconsideration of this decision must be submitted within **TWO (2) MONTHS** from the mail date of this decision. Extensions of time under 37 CFR 1.136(a) are permitted. The reconsideration request should include a cover letter entitled "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a)" or "Renewed Petition to withdraw the holding of abandonment," or as discussed below "Renewed Petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b)."

¹A grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed; In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after June 8, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(1);

(3) a showing to the satisfaction of the Commissioner that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(a) was unavoidable; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

The application became abandoned on 18 February, 2004, for failure to timely file a response to the Notice to File Missing Parts of Nonprovisional Application mailed on 17 December, 2003, which set a two (2) month shortened period for reply. No extensions of the time for reply in accordance with 37 CFR 1.136(a) were obtained. Notice of Abandonment was mailed on 12 November, 2004.

Petitioner asserts that the Notice mailed on 17 December, 2003, was never received.

Petitioner has filed an executed oath or declaration and the late-filing surcharge with the present petition.

PETITION TO WITHDRAW THE HOLDING OF ABANDONMENT

Petitioner asserts that the Notice mailed on 17 December, 2003, was never received. A review of the record indicates no irregularity in the mailing of the Office action, and in the absence of any irregularity in the mailing, there is a strong presumption that the Office action was properly mailed to the address of record. This presumption may be overcome by a showing that the Office action was not in fact received. The showing required to establish the failure to receive an Office action must include a statement from the practitioner stating that the Office communication was not received by the practitioner and attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records indicates that the Office communication was not received. A copy of the docket record where the non-received Office communication would have been entered had it been received and docketed must be attached to and referenced in practitioner's statement.² The showing outlined above may not be sufficient if there are circumstances that point to a conclusion that the Office communication may have been lost after receipt rather than a conclusion that the Office action was lost in the mail (e.g. if the practitioner has a history of not receiving Office actions).

The showing of record is insufficient to warrant withdrawal of the holding of abandonment. Petitioner has presented neither a statement from the practitioner attesting to the fact that a search of the file jacket and docket records indicates that the Office communication was not received nor a copy of the docket record where the non-received Office communication would have

²M.P.E.P. § 711.03(c); See Notice entitled "Withdrawing the Holding of Abandonment When Office Actions Are Not Received," 1156 O.G. 53 (November 16, 1993).

been entered had it been received and docketed attached to and referenced in petitioner's statement. As the required showing has not been presented, the petition must be dismissed.

PETITION UNDER 37 CFR 1.137(a)

The Commissioner may revive an abandoned application if the delay in responding to the relevant outstanding Office requirement is shown to the satisfaction of the Commissioner to be "unavoidable".³ Decisions on reviving abandoned applications on the basis of "unavoidable" delay have adopted the reasonably prudent person standard in determining if the delay was unavoidable:

The word 'unavoidable' . . . is applicable to ordinary human affairs, and requires no more or greater care or diligence than is generally used and observed by prudent and careful men in relation to their most important business. It permits them in the exercise of this care to rely upon the ordinary and trustworthy agencies of mail and telegraph, worthy and reliable employees, and such other means and instrumentalities as are usually employed in such important business. If unexpectedly, or through the unforeseen fault or imperfection of these agencies and instrumentalities, there occurs a failure, it may properly be said to be unavoidable, all other conditions of promptness in its rectification being present.⁴

The showing of record is inadequate to establish unavoidable delay within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. § 133 and 37 CFR 1.137(a).⁵ Specifically, an application is "unavoidably" abandoned only where petitioner, or counsel for petitioner, takes all action necessary for a proper response to the outstanding Office action,

³35 U.S.C. § 133.

⁴In re Mattullath, 38 App. D.C. 497, 514-15 (1912) (quoting Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31, 32-33 (1887)); see also Winkler v. Ladd, 221 F. Supp. 550, 552, 138 USPQ 666, 167-68 (D.D.C. 1963), aff'd, 143 USPQ 172 (D.C. Cir. 1963); Ex parte Henrich, 1913 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 139, 141 (1913). In addition, decisions on revival are made on a "case-by-case basis, taking all the facts and circumstances into account." Smith v. Mossinghoff, 671 F.2d 533, 538, 213 USPQ 977, 982 (D.C. Cir. 1982). Finally, a petition cannot be granted where a petitioner has failed to meet his or her burden of establishing that the delay was "unavoidable." Haines v. Quigg, 673 F. Supp. 314, 316-17, 5 USPQ2d 1130, 1131-32 (N.D. Ind. 1987).

⁵See MPEP 711(c) (III) (C) (2) for a discussion of the requirements for a showing of unavoidable delay.

but through the intervention of unforeseen circumstances, such as failure of mail, telegraph, facsimile, or the negligence of otherwise reliable employees, the response is not timely received in the Office.⁶

As the showing of record, petitioner's bald assertion that the Notice mailed on 17 December, 2003, was never received, in itself, is insufficient to satisfy the requirements of a grantable petition under 37 CFR 1.137(a), the petition will be dismissed.

ALTERNATIVE VENUE

Petitioner may wish to consider filing a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), which now provides that where the delay in reply was unintentional, a petition may be filed to revive an abandoned application or a lapsed patent pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b). A grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) must be accompanied by:

(1) the required reply, unless previously filed. In a nonprovisional application abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may be met by the filing of a continuing application. In a nonprovisional utility or plant application filed on or after 8 June, 1995, and abandoned for failure to prosecute, the required reply may also be met by the filing of a request for continued examination in compliance with § 1.114. In an application or patent, abandoned or lapsed for failure to pay the issue fee or any portion thereof, the required reply must be the payment of the issue fee or any outstanding balance thereof.

(2) the petition fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(m);

(3) a statement that the entire delay in filing the required reply from the due date for the reply until the filing of a grantable petition pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(b) was unintentional. The Commissioner may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional; and

(4) any terminal disclaimer (and fee as set forth in 37 CFR 1.20(d)) required pursuant to 37 CFR 1.137(c)).

The filing of a petition under the unintentional standard cannot be intentionally delayed and therefore should be filed promptly. A person seeking revival due to unintentional delay cannot make a statement that the delay was unintentional unless the entire delay, including the delay from the date it was discovered that

⁶Ex parte Pratt, 1887 Dec. Comm'r Pat. 31 (Comm'r Pat. 1887).

the application was abandoned until the filing of the petition to revive under 37 CFR 1.137(b), was unintentional. A statement that the delay was unintentional is not appropriate if petitioner intentionally delayed the filing of a petition for revival under 37 CFR 1.137(b).

Should petitioner decide to file a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b), the additional petition fee due would be \$1,500.00 for other than a small entity.

A copy of the form for filing a petition under 37 CFR 1.137(b) to revive an application unintentionally abandoned is enclosed herewith for petitioner's convenience.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

By mail: Mail Stop Petition
Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

By FAX: (703)872-9306
Attn: Office of Petitions

By hand: Customer Service Window
Mail Stop Petition
Randolph Building
401 Dulany Street
Alexandria, VA 22314

Telephone inquiries concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571)272-3231.



Douglas I. Wood
Senior Petitions Attorney
Office of Petitions

Enclosure: Form PTO/SB/64
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